

UNDER CONSIDERATION

COMPANIONS IN CHRIST

AN INTERVIEW WITH ADAM YOUNG, VICAR AT THE CHAPEL OF THE INCARNATION

Adam came to Gainesville in May of 2018 with his wife, Beth, and three children. Although he is a Georgia grad, we still love him! Adam served with Desire Street Ministries as well as churches in Alabama and Orlando before moving to Gainesville to serve at the Chapel of the Incarnation, an Episcopal mission church by the campus of the University of Florida.

How did you end up getting connected to the Christian Study Center?

I knew Richard Horner, the previous director since he served as an adjunct professor at RTS Orlando. This wasn't a small factor. I really trusted Richard Horner and knew I would want to link up with the ministry at the Christian Study Center. Tim Hayse, minister at Christ Community Church here in Gainesville, and I were in seminary together. We laugh that God called us both to Gainesville, Florida—not a big place and not on our radar. A nexus of relationships has formed in several of the churches- in places like Creekside Church and City Church. The Christian Study Center serves as a hub of a wheel to bring together various church and faith communities to focus on common concerns. It's a gathering place in the same spirit as my own desire as an Anglican to work across lines. We can focus not on particularities of difference but on common concerns. How do we live in a fast-moving culture which has a lot of tension points? How do we think more critically and honestly and ask questions together? The Study Center is a leader in encouraging people to connect outside of their smaller bubbles. It makes my world bigger to be a part of the Study Center.

What are your thoughts about the role of the Study Center alongside the church?



Campus churches and ministries all serve important roles in spiritual formation, but the Study Center serves as a third space doing something unique. There are churches of a variety of stripes and colors and denominations that are doing wonderful teaching and worship, but we don't have a

lot of places to sit and think about the implications of our faith from an academic and intellectual perspective. What's the end goal of the practices we are engaging in? How do we think about these things and steward God's creation in a way that develops robust engaged disciples? Some of my most challenging conversations with astute students inevitably end up with references to the Study Center. The UF community would be impoverished without the Study Center.

We certainly benefit as well from our church partners and are grateful for them!

Tell me what you think about university students today. How have you seen changes from your day or even since you've been here at UF?

These students are very astute and very driven. Their focus is on achievement and that leads to some performance anxiety. There is never a zenith where they can put it down. They finish undergraduate and it's on to graduate school. The students are always looking down the line at where it's going to lead. They want to make good on what they have been given but again, it is a mental health challenge for everyone.

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When I was in school it was not nearly as pronounced. Schedules are intense. When I was in school I never would have turned down an opportunity to socialize, but these students are very dedicated to their academic pursuits. This is a credit to them, but everything has a shadow side.

There is a lot of talk about identity. Do you find that to be an issue for the students?

The Disneyfication of our culture has been going on for a while. Every show in pop culture brings out exceptionalism. While certain characteristics and people are highlighted — greater diversity is good—but what it shows is that everyone is exceptional and doing well except me. The burden of our cultural moment has to do with creating your own identity over and against all the others on social media who are curating their reality. I think students today largely don't like social media. I think we will see a new group of students in future years who are going to do this differently. Hopefully, there will be a corrective that keeps us from falling into the abyss of drowning in dopamine.

The millstone around everyone's neck is proving yourself.

I'd like to contrast this with grace bestowed by God. You are already a unique and valuable person.

What are your hopes for the students you serve in this community?

That they have every opportunity to come to the realization of their walk with God in this world—the largeness of belonging to their creator and exploring His good creation. I'm optimistic. Students want something real and lasting. They aren't satisfied with mantras and bumper sticker symbolism. Especially in the church, I see they want to be rooted and grounded. They are interested in knowing, for instance, where the Bible comes from rather than will this verse help my life feel better today.

Do you think part of the draw of the Chapel is that you may attract a group of students who are already thinking that way?

I think so. You are probably not coming to the Chapel if you are just looking for relevance. Students want to think more holistically about the Christian faith as it relates to their vocation, and their sense of purpose and vision. This is something the Study Center does very well. You create topics and opportunities and groups for conversations to dive into that.

Tell me what you are currently involved with at the Center?

I wish I could do everything at the Study Center. I'm attending Josh Perlin's reading group on Stanley Hauerwas. [Josh is a graduate student at UF who attends the Chapel and is engaged to Sycora Benavides, our coffeehouse manager—LL] The special lectures provide great opportunities for me to bring students and parishioners to engage in conversations that we wouldn't otherwise have. I really enjoy the classes that Mike Sacasas teaches.

The classes, lectures, and reading groups at the Center are well done and stimulating; they leave me wanting to learn more. They fill me up but leave me curious about the things I still don't know. There is something really appealing that happens here in all the programming. It's beginning a conversation and helping us to enlarge our own understanding of what it means to live in this world in faithfulness to God.

Thank you, Adam, for sharing your thoughts with us today. Your friendship and partnership at the Center continue to be a great encouragement.

Laura Lynch





EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: selected travel, writing, and speaking

- An essay titled “Outsourcing Virtue” published in *The Point* on Feb. 22, 2023.
- Interviewed at RTS Orlando on technology and the Christian life for students and faculty on Feb. 15, 2023.
- Led an online seminar for PHOS Creative, a local design studio, on ChatGPT, Feb. 14, 2023.
- Interviewed for *Vox* by Sean Illing on the podcast *The Gray Area*, “The power of attention in a world of distraction” on Dec. 8, 2022.
- An essay titled “The Virtue of Noticing: Refusing numbness and recovering wonder” published in *Comment* on Oct. 6, 2022.

NEWS & NOTES

CSC

- We welcomed a new custodian, Katie Toman, to the staff team this spring.
- The spring kick-off lecture, “Learning in the Age of Artificial Intelligence,” by Mike Sacasas included a lovely reception by our director of hospitality, Anabel Zimmerman, and an orientation to the semester. Mike’s thoughtful lecture is available as a podcast on “For Your Consideration: *A Podcast of the Christian Study Center*.”
- Spring lectures and events included Myles Werntz on loneliness, Samuel Kimbriel on friendship and the virtues, and Andy Crouch on his new book, *The Life We’re Looking For*. Crouch’s book is also the text for one of our spring reading groups.
- Other reading groups included readings from Stanley Hauerwas on narrative, virtue and the church, and Parker Palmer on education.
- The Director’s class—packed with students—is working through Genesis 1-5 and the beginning of wisdom.
- Professor Brent Henderson is hosting the Graduate Roundtable, a graduate student group for meals and conversation.

PASCAL’S

- Sycora Benavides, manager, and fiancé, Josh Perlin, will marry August 13, 2023. Congratulations to the happy couple!
- This Spring the Barista Fellows are studying G.K. Chesterton’s classic book *Orthodoxy*. These barista evenings consist of readings and dinner conversations throughout the semester. With the guidance of the coffeehouse manager Sycora Benavides the students examine how to live out their faith in their studies, work, families, and churches.

TRIBUTE GIFTS

- David Yachabach in memory of his son, Joe Yachabach
- Tammy Euliano in memory of her nephew, Joe Yachabach
- Richard Carnell in memory of his parents, Carol and Corbin Carnell
- Katherine Zimmerman in honor of her niece, Anabel Zimmerman
- Cliff and Gail Johnston in memory of their son, Nathan Johnston
- Chris and Sasha Rehm in honor of Richard Horner



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Chapel of the Incarnation

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Public Lecture

Andy Crouch, “Boring Robots: Why Technology Both Succeeds and Fails”

April 13 | 7 p.m. | Creekside Community Church

Co-sponsored by Creekside Community Church, Christ Community Church, and City Church

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